

## The story of Chi Si Chen (Autumn Silver Reed)

### Chapter 114: Birthplace

**D**irections were a bit sparse, but if we went north we should find the river and bridge with the road to the capitol. The woods spoke to me, lamenting the storm. Not because of its power, but because its hatred, its joy in ripping branches from trees, trees from the ground, turning it infertile. Fey was close, the feel of crossroads, yet different. And unreachable. The seelie court had closed the borders, hidden themselves as the storm broke. I was sure that only a bare few of the elves in charge ever thought about them, about the the spirits of wood and stone, about the life that bound this land together. I had so much to learn, so much to experience. To build a land for all, hunter and hunted, but a place for everybody. Cuura rode some distance away as she needed to swerve around thickets and dense growth, and Eos was ahead... probably... And then an elf, an elf clothed in ancient Shou robes, stepped out from *somewhere*, asking me if I had a moment to spare.

**A**cepting would mean setting aside an important mission for a more important mission for an even more important mission? And then I wasn't counting the Daemon book, the twelve, and all other things we would need to finish. Why was I even considering it? Because... because this elf managed to be convinced that I would listen, yet at the same time showed that his request was neither for his own good, nor for anybody else. It was just plain *necessary*. Listen, my Mistress taught me. Listen carefully for those crying out for help. And this elf managed to cry even louder than the whole beleaguered Evermeet. Something *needs* to be done. By mortals. I learned several lessons today, but this may be one I should never forget. He picked up others. Felina, Nethander, and the wood elf Uziel. Who was really happy to see me getting within her reach. I could see her raw hatred, her drive to kill me. I should be afraid, I was afraid, but more than that, I had to love this scarred and scared little deadly child. She too called out for help. She was so terribly alone. I almost missed that he had used time magic: It had been later when we picked up Felina, nature showed me this, and she had been successful. I kept silent about this, the weave of time, like the weave of fate and magic, should not be idly disturbed.

**W**e were dropped on a wreck, a broken spelljammer, falling in the darkness. Just a single star behind us, blackness before us. Then we reached some air, and gravity shifted. No longer flying, falling, and Uziel shared, oh how predictable, her flying magic with Nethander and Felina. Allowing her hatred to overrule the good of all. Evil. And I could only pity her, as I flew down to the pitch dark surface. Felina took the lead, the ground crisscrossed with markings, rune-like, a dark and final ritual in progress. An unborn life was hanging at a thread. Not dying, dying was as much part of life as birth, no never being born. Karma twisted, balance destroyed. Nethander and Uziel did not notice, but the lack of joy, I was sure Felina felt it. A hole in the ground in one of the focal points of the rune. Uziel and Felina went first, Uziel saving Felina as suddenly magic disappeared. Nice trap, an anti magic field that grew when absorbing magic. And Uziel was pissed that she had warned me. There was still some good in her, *deep* inside. Many died here. Fallen, killed by traps, spells, perhaps even automatons of some kind. And their souls were still around, trapped. I collect a token here and there, hopefully an anchor for those spirits, and softly whisper that if they kept hold on it I would try to take them. Uziel mourned too (about several elves), and then tried to get me killed when triggering the traps on the central entrance tower. The lightning I evaded, and the other thing... it attacked a power I did not possess. My hunch would be psionic, as it was quite possible that the anti-magic shell would not cancel one of those rare powers. Which reminded me. That halfling we met might very well be one of them.

**N**o-one attacked us as we entered, an extremely basic complex. Remains of a dismantled jammer, remains of servants eaten by other servants, an ever shrinking cycle of resources, a world, a universe about to end. Yet the one who planned this, it could be only a single entity, that one must be extremely close to the final solution. A carefully planned massacre of the birth of a universe. And we must stop it? Doubts have their time and place. Again we went down and in the haze Uziel and Nethander got attacked by steam mephits. but the alchemical

anti-fire flasks I picked up worked wonders. When we were back in Waterdeep I had to restock. Through the mist we saw a flat pillar with some weird light. A very narrow bridge across, and a very deep fall if one missed a step. Uziel went first, telling us about some frog like creature dancing around a ball of multi hued light. Divine light, I could tell that without any doubt. She could describe the rest only in the vaguest of terms, clearly lacking the deeper knowledge. Hatred and ignorance, the most dangerous combination in existence. We prepared for a moment, I used only my bardic powers as I was sure I would need my Art on Evermeet and to use divine magic here... That felt unwise. Uziel tried to hit the creature were it hurt but it clearly had solid defenses and it knocked Uziel silly. I swapped places, like I had done with major Locke, but with a smaller chance that she actually learned anything. We weren't really capable of disabling the creature, but we did manage to breaking its concentration on the ritual, and when we did so, the light suddenly exploded outward... And we were back in the unending whiteness of the Astral, with the Shou elf telling us a job well done, and an unheard voice asking if I want something in return. I asked for it to release the souls, and then I was placed back. Cuura just about to swerve around thickets and dense growth, and Eos was ahead... probably...

*Human female Paragon/3, Wu-Jen/1, Naturalist/3, Ancestral Hierophant/2, Heartfanner/1, Sublime Chord/1*